

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4764

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T HONG KONG 5089

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1&2

TAGS: PINT, PFOR CH

SUBJ: CHINA HIGHLIGHTS NO. 9

1. CHINESE MEDIA REACTION TO U.S.-SRV PARIS TALKS

CHINESE MEDIA REACTION TO THE U.S. - VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATIONS IN
PARIS HAS BEEN FAVORABLE, ILLUSTRATING AGAIN THAT WHETHER THE
VENUE IS HANOI OR HAVANA, THE PRC WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE
WITH A U.S. PRESENCE TO BALANCE OFF THE SOVIETS. PEKING'S
OFFICIAL NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY CARRIED A DISPATCH FROM HANOI ON
THE OPENING OF THE PARIS TALKS, NOTING THAT A COMMUNIQUE
ISSUED ON THE FIRST DAY DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS "FRANK AND
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USEFUL". A COMMENTARY IN THE HONG KONG COMMUNIST PRESS
REMARKED THAT THE ADDITION OF AMERICANS TO MANY RUSSIANS
IN VIETNAM WOULD MAKE THE SITUATION THERE "QUITE LIVELY".
AFTER REPLAYING ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S COMMENTS
THAT THE U.S. MUST FORGET THE PAST AND SOONER OR LATER
ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM, THE ARTICLE OBSERVED:
"INTELLIGENT PEOPLE TAKE THE PAST AS AN EXPERIENCE AND A

LESSON; ONLY FOOLISH PEOPLE LET THE PAST TIE THEM DOWN WITH INDECISIVENESS". THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS HAS ALSO CARRIED FOREIGN WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OF THE TALKS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PARTICIPANTS, ADDITIONAL SIGNS OF CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. MANEUVERING OVER PLA LEADERSHIP CHANGES
PRC CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERS APPEAR TO BE MANEUVERING OVER THE RESTAFFING AND REORGANIZATION OF THE TOP ECHELONS OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY IN PREPARATION FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS THAT WILL MORE THAN LIKELY DISCUSS MILITARY PRIORITIES AND WEAPONS MODERNIZATION. IN RECENT WEEKS, WE HAVE SEEN THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW AIR FORCE COMMANDER, TWO DEPUTY CHIEFS OF STAFF FOR THE NAVY AND THE AIR FORCE, AND A NEW COMMANDER IN THE POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL NANKING MILITARY REGION. DESPITE ASSERTIONS BY TWO SENIOR PRC OFFICIALS ABROAD THAT THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP IS PLANNING TO CARRY OUT AN EXTENSIVE RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN IN THE MILITARY, PERSONNEL CHANGES THUS FAR DO NOT SUGGEST THAT A GENERAL PLA SHAKEUP HAS BEGUN. IF ANYTHING, THESE APPOINTMENTS AND THE GROWING POLITICAL ROLE OF THE PLA IN SEVERAL PROVINCES INDICATE THAT SENIOR MILITARY FIGURES -- ESPECIALLY CANTON MILITARY REGION COMMANDER HSU SHIH-YU-- ARE STRENGTHENING THEIR POSITIONS VIS-A-VIS THE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP.

3. AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR
THE REAPPEARANCE OF VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING ENDED SPECULATION ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD RECENT REGIME DECISIONS, BUT THE LEADERSHIP TRIUMVIRATE OF HUA KUO-FENG, YEH

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CHIEN-YING AND VICE PRIMER LI HSIEN-NIEN SEEMED TO BE TAKING ON AN ADDITIONAL PARTNER IN SECURITY MAN WANG TUNG-HSING. FIRST SPOTTED IN A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE TACHING CONFERENCE PRELIMINARIES IN HEILUNGKIANG, WANG ALONE JOINED THE OTHER THREE IN THEIR MAY DAY WALKS IN THE PARK. PERHAPS INDICATING THAT WANG'S ROLE IS ON THE DOMESTIC SIDE. HOWEVER, DURING THE EVENING FIREWORKS DISPLAY HE APPARENTLY REMAINED WITH OTHER POLITBURO MEMBERS WHILE HAU, YEH, AND LI CHATTED WITH THE FOREIGN DIGNITARIES. WANG'S SHARING OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL LIMELIGHT COULD REFLECT CONTINUED LEADERSHIP DISSENSION OVER THE REHABILITATION OF TENG HSIAO-PING.
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